

## Resistance in Mexico

*In the Lands of Fire and Sun: Resistance and Accommodation in the Huichol Sierra, 1723–1930.* By Michele McArdle Stephens. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018. Pp. 222. \$50.00 cloth.

The Huichols, in the high mountains of the Sierra Madre Occidental in Mexico, survived Spanish colonial rule and still resist today (or try to resist) the Mexican state. Stephens's study charts the history of the Huichols, from the arrival and later conquest of the area by the Spaniards to the post-independence period and early decades of the twentieth century.

The book is divided into six chapters, plus an introduction and a conclusion. The first chapter focuses on the colonial period, particularly on the eighteenth century and early decades of the nineteenth century, when the Huichols resisted the Spanish rule. They were eventually colonized, and they partially accepted (not without struggle) some colonial legislation to keep their lands.

Chapters 2 to 6 map the different strategies used by the Huichols in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century to keep their lands and traditions alive. The expansion of the haciendas in the postcolonial period was the major battle that the Huichols needed to fight, especially because the colonial legislation that once offered their lands some protection (*fundo legal*) disappeared with independence. It was also in the postcolonial period that the debate regarding savagery and modernization intensified, and the Catholic Church became a major player in the "civilization" of the "idolatrous Indians" in the Sierra Madre, although traditional Huichol rituals continued throughout the period. Chapter 6 details the challenges and struggles that the Porfiriato period and the Zapatistas rebellion posed for the Huichols, and how, again, the latter created different strategies to survive and keep their lands and their way of life alive.

The author effectively combines archival research, secondary sources, and ethnographic accounts in her historic analysis of the Huichols. She rightly discusses intragroup differences among the Huichols throughout her book, avoiding any homogenization when talking about resistance and accommodation. Instead, she highlights how singular Huichol towns, or communities within those towns, adopted diverse political and cultural strategies to pursue their goals or to survive.

The claim made in the cover blurb regarding the incorporation of archaeological elements is, however, an overstatement. A deeper engagement with archaeological and anthropological sources would have enhanced Stephens's description of the sociopolitical organization and rituals of the Huichols. See, for instance, Johannes Neurath, *Las fiestas de la casa grande*, (INAH, 2002); J. Jáuregui and J. Neurath, eds., *Flechadores de estrellas* (INAH, 2003); and V. M. Téllez Lozano, *Acercamiento al estudio de los sistemas de cargos entre las comunidades huicholas de Jalisco y Nayarit, México* (Diálogo Andino 43, 2014). There are some important works on the resistance and cultural adaptation or hybridity practices among the Huichols, very similar to Stephens' arguments, that are missing from her publication. Among them are J. Fikes, *Huichol Indian Identity and Adaptation* (University of Michigan, 1985) and J. J. Torres, *El hostigamiento a "el costumbre" huichol: los procesos de hibridación social* (Colegio de Michoacán, 2000).

Moreover, the treatment of the colonial and postcolonial periods is greatly uneven in the book. One chapter (17 pages) is dedicated to the former, versus five chapters (74 pages) devoted to the nineteenth century and first decades of the twentieth century. Still, the meticulous account of the Huichols from the post-independence period to today will be most welcomed by scholars working on indigeneity in Mexico and Latin America and by a broader audience interested in indigenous rights.

To conclude, this book, based on Stephens' doctoral dissertation, is a well-written and engaging monograph. A deeper discussion of anthropological sources and the integration of archaeological evidence would have enriched some of the passages of the book, but Stephens's work is, nevertheless, a praiseworthy contribution to the history of the Huichols. Most importantly, the author succeeds in bringing Huichols' agency to the forefront of the historical analysis of the region.

BEATRIZ MARÍN-AGUILERA

University of Cambridge

Cambridge, United Kingdom

[bm499@cam.ac.uk](mailto:bm499@cam.ac.uk)